



CREATING A COMMUNITY LABORATORY

Dr. Kristin Ildre engages in mysterious, exotic research at the far reaches of the globe. As a researcher at the Applied Physics Laboratory's Polar Science Center and an assistant professor in the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences at the University of Washington, Kristin spends her days studying large marine mammals in the Arctic.

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Her work aims to understand how they survive in such extreme environments and how climate change affects them and, ultimately, all of us. "Many scientists want the public to understand the work they're doing, but there are few opportunities for us to share," she says. "Pacific Science Center gives scientists a direct connection to the community."

Kristin has been involved with Pacific Science Center through our Science Communication Fellowship Program, which provides scientists with the skills to help articulate and explain complex scientific issues when communicating with the general public. During monthly Scientist Spotlight events and at large-

scale research weekends, each participating scientist develops an activity linked to their research that engages the public. As part of Pacific Science Center's annual Polar Science Weekend, Kristin developed an activity about narwhals—the intriguing, deep-diving marine mammals that are particularly vulnerable to climate change. Her work demonstrates how these creatures survive in a hostile marine ecosystem, where short food chains shape the behavior of top predators.

"I believe in scientists getting out and talking to the community," Kristin says. "It's our role to share what we're doing, learning and publishing. Pacific Science Center helps us share that knowledge in a broader context, one that's accessible to the general public."

"Pacific Science Center has helped me think more critically about what we, as scientists, think is relevant." She adds that scientists have an obligation to make the general public more aware and help them to understand their work. In doing so, scientists discover new ways to share their knowledge and research, encouraging people to dig deeper into important scientific issues. "Pacific Science Center gives me an outlet. It brings me out into the community... to communicate with the general public, which is not always easy for scientists."

SHOWCASING LOCAL RESEARCH

Pacific Science Center illuminates the importance and relevance of science by making it accessible to people in their everyday lives and in the shared experiences of the community.

Launched in 2011 and changing every six months, the Portal to Current Research (P2CR) serves as a way to integrate current science into the museum as a whole. Designed to be change-ready, the gallery is designed to support rapidly changing content. P2CR features two exhibitions a year, created by in-house exhibit development in collaboration with area scientists. Each exhibition focuses on a different topic, such as memory, climate change, or space weather. These broad themes are then refined based on the research happening at a local level.

In a little over six years, the exhibits team has installed thirteen exhibitions addressing a variety of topics—Extreme Environments, Chemists: Catalysts for Change, Investigating Arctic Ice Melt, Exploring Space with Local NASA Scientists, Memory: Past meets Present. Content for each of these exhibitions is developed by collaborating with active researchers from the Seattle-area science community and educational insti-

BY THE NUMBERS

Our Science Communication Fellowship Program and workshops trained 115 scientists in FY16 and 140 in FY17 to share their work with the community.

They joined hundreds of scientists in our volunteer corps, presenting at

Research Weekends/*Curiosity Days*

FY16: 3 large-scale weekends with 36,120 guests

FY17: 10 weekends
with 85,000 guests



Science Cafés/*Science in the City Lectures*

FY16: 11 events with 1,545 guests

FY17: 27 events with
1,702 guests

tutions, such as the University of Washington and the University of Puget Sound among others. These professionals form an advisory committee that helps guide the exhibition team—directing them to exciting local research and helping to craft the story. Often they lend laboratory tools and videos and/or help brainstorm interactives that showcase their work. When the exhibition is deinstalled, some scientists borrow exhibit components for display in their own labs or research institutions.

SETTING THE STANDARD

In addition to our regional efforts, Pacific Science Center leads the growing, nationwide Portal to the Public Network, which consists of 44 museums, universities, zoos, and other organizations that have adopted our tested strategy for scientist-and public engagement.

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Meet A Scientist Events

FY16: 12 events with 11,595 guests

FY17: 38 events with
105,055 guests

